



Child Protection Policy 2017

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1. Policy statement

Ryde Carnival Association (RCA) recognises its responsibility and duty of care to safeguard and promote the welfare of children within the legal framework of the Children's Acts 1989 and 2004. All children (persons under the age of 18) have a right to protection, and the needs of disabled children and others who may be particularly vulnerable must be taken into account. RCA will ensure the safety and protection of all children who are taking part in RCA's Carnival and Club related activities through adherence to these guidelines that it has adopted.

The aim of the RCA Child Protection Policy is to promote good practise:

- Providing children and young people with appropriate safety and protection whilst in the care of RCA and
- Allowing all members/volunteers to make informed and confident responses to specific child protection issues.

These guidelines are for the use of all RCA members and volunteers and will be made available to the parents and carers of the children. Through them we will endeavour to ensure that:

- Children and Young people are listened to, valued and respected
- Members and volunteers are aware of the need to be alert to the signs of maltreatment and know what to do with their concerns

All child protection concerns should be acted upon immediately. If you are concerned that a child might be at risk or actually suffering abuse you should tell the designated Child Protection Officer (CPO): Liz Allen (Chair) or if you prefer email her at rydecarnival@talktalk.net. If the CPO is not available speak to Jo Morrison (Vice Chair) or Penny Verity (Secretary). In an emergency or If you are worried about sharing concerns about abuse with a colleague, you can contact the police direct or the appropriate agency through the numbers below.

- IoW Children's Safeguarding team (for concerns about a child) 0300 3000117
- Local Area Designated Officer (LADO) – Paul Barnard 01983 823723
(for concerns about an adult working with children)
- NSPCC Child Protection Helpline 0808 800 5000
- Childline 0800 1111

2. Promoting good practice

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined in “Working together to Safeguard Children 2017” <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-safeguard-children--2> as:

- protecting children from maltreatment;
- preventing impairment of children's health or development;
- ensuring that children are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care; and
- taking action to enable all children to have the best life chances.

Child abuse, particularly sexual abuse, can arouse strong emotions in those facing such a situation. It is important to understand these feelings and not allow them to interfere with your judgement about the appropriate action to take.

Abuse can occur within many situations including the home, school and the leisure environment. Some individuals will actively seek employment or voluntary work with young people in order to harm them. Members, chaperones, volunteers and instructors will have regular contact with young people and be an important link in identifying cases where they need protection. All suspicious cases of poor practice should be reported following the guidelines in this document. When a child enters our care having been subjected to child abuse outside the Carnival environment, Carnival can play a crucial role in improving the child's self-esteem. In such instances the Association must work with the appropriate agencies to ensure the child receives the required support.

3. Good practice guidelines

All personnel should be encouraged to demonstrate exemplary behaviour in order to promote the children's welfare and to reduce the likelihood of allegations of impropriety being made. The ***RCA Behaviour Code*** sets out what is expected from all involved to create a positive culture and climate.

In addition, the following specific procedures should be followed:

- Where possible there should always be at least two adults present with a group of children – it is vital that the ratio of adult to child is adequate to ensure safety. For children under 8 the ration should be no more than 1:8; for children under 5 it should be no more than 1:6
- Securing parental consent in writing to act in loco parentis, if the need arises to administer emergency first aid and/or other medical treatment.
- Keeping a written record of any injury that occurs, along with the details of any treatment given.
- Requesting written parental consent if members and volunteers are required to transport young people in their cars.

N.B. It may sometimes be necessary for members or volunteers to do things of a personal nature for children, particularly if they are young or are disabled. These tasks should only be carried out with the full understanding and consent of parents and the child involved. There is a need to be responsive to a person's reactions. If a person is fully dependent on you, talk with him/her about what you are doing and give choices where possible. This is particularly so if you are involved in any dressing or undressing of outer clothing, or where there is physical contact, lifting or assisting a child to carry out particular activities. Avoid taking on the responsibility for tasks for which you are not appropriately trained.

Outings & Trips

- All vehicles hired for outings must be insured, roadworthy and fitted with seatbelts
- Roll call will be taken at the start of a journey and again before commencing the return journey; if travelling in more than one vehicle, children will be encouraged to travel in the same vehicle there and back
- Members/Volunteers accompanying trips will carry the contact numbers for the home organization and emergency services in the event of an alert being necessary
- If a child goes missing while on a trip, an immediate search will be instigated. If the child cannot be found within half an hour, the appropriate security staff and the police should be notified
- If, having notified security staff and the police, the child cannot be found, the parents/carers of the child will be notified immediately
- The care of the remaining children is paramount. It is imperative that they return to the home site as quickly as possible, while a senior member/volunteer remains at the visit site to coordinate contact between security staff and the child's parents/carers

Incidents that must be reported/recorded

If any of the following incidents occur, you should report this immediately to another colleague and make a written record. You should also ensure the parents of the child are informed:

- If you accidentally hurt a performer.
- If he/she seems distressed in any manner.
- If a performer appears to be sexually aroused by your actions.
- If a performer misunderstands or misinterprets something you have done.

4. Use of photographic/filming equipment at Carnival events:

It is possible that some people have used Carnivals as an opportunity to take inappropriate photographs or film footage of young people. All members should be vigilant and any concerns should be reported to the designated Child Protection Officer.

Videoing as a coaching aid: there is no intention to prevent instructors using video equipment as a legitimate coaching aid. However, performers and their parents/carers should be made aware that this is part of the teaching programme and such films should be stored safely.

5. Recruitment and training of staff and volunteers:

RCA recognises that anyone may have the potential to abuse children in some way and that all reasonable steps are taken to ensure unsuitable people are prevented from working with children.

Not every Member or volunteer will be expected to work with children as part of their duties, and there are many tasks that do not entail access to children. All members/volunteers working with children shall complete an application form and provide details of their Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) certificate and, if considered appropriate an enhanced DBS check will be undertaken with their consent.

All Executive Committee members will undertake a Basic Safeguarding Awareness e-learning course and all members and volunteers working directly with children will be encouraged to complete a course. Those identified as suitable are free online courses offered by North Yorkshire Safeguarding Children Board and Kirklees Safeguarding Children Board.

6. Response to allegations or suspicions

It is not the responsibility of anyone in the RCA to decide whether or not child abuse has taken place. However, there is a responsibility to act on any concerns through contact with the appropriate authorities.

RCA will assure all members/volunteers that it will fully support and protect anyone, who in good faith reports his or her concern that a colleague is, or may be, abusing a child.

Where there is a complaint against a member of staff there may be three types of investigation:

- A criminal investigation,
- A child protection investigation,
- An internal misconduct investigation.

The results of the police and child protection investigation may well influence the misconduct investigation, but all information will be used to make a decision.

Action if there are concerns:

(i) Concerns about poor practice

If, following consideration, the allegation is clearly about poor practice; the RCA's Executive Committee will deal with it as a misconduct issue.

If the allegation is about poor practice by the RCA or the Child Protection Officer, or if the matter has been handled inadequately and concerns remain, an independent investigation by three RCA members not involved in the matter under consideration shall decide on how to deal with the allegation.

(ii) Concerns about suspected abuse

Any suspicion that a child has been abused by either a member or a volunteer should be reported to the Child Protection Officer, who will take such steps as considered necessary to ensure the safety of the child in question and any other child who may be at risk. The Child Protection Officer will refer the allegation to the LADO who may involve the police, or go directly to the police if out-of-hours. The parents or carers of the child will be contacted as soon as possible following advice from the LADO.

If the Child Protection Officer is the subject of the suspicion/allegation, the report must be made to the Chair or Vice-Chair who will refer the allegation to the LADO.

(iii) Concerns outside the immediate Carnival environment (e.g. a parent or carer)

- Report your concerns to the Child Protection Officer, who should contact social services or the police as soon as possible. See 4. below for the information social services or the police will need.
- If the Child Protection officer is not available, the person being told of or discovering the abuse should contact the Chair or Vice-chair immediately.
- Social Services and the Child Protection Officer will decide how to involve the parents/carers. See 4 below regarding information needed for social services.
- Maintain confidentiality on a need to know basis only.

(iv) Information for social services or the police about suspected abuse

To ensure that this information is as helpful as possible, a detailed record should always be made at the time of the disclosure/concern, which should include the following:

- The child's name, age and date of birth.
- The child's home address and telephone number.
- Whether or not the person making the report is expressing their own concerns or those of someone else.
- The nature of the allegation. Include dates, times, any special factors and other relevant information.
- Make a clear distinction between what is fact, and what is opinion or hearsay.
- A description of any visible bruising or other injuries. Also any indirect signs, such as behavioural changes.
- Details of witnesses to the incidents.
- The child's account, if it can be given, of what has happened and how any bruising or other injuries occurred.
- Have the parents been contacted?
- If so what has been said?
- Has anyone else been consulted? If so record details.
- If the child was not the person who reported the incident, has the child been spoken to? If so what was said?
- Has anyone been alleged to be the abuser? Record details.
- Where possible referral to the police or social services should be confirmed in writing within 24 hours and the name of the contact who took the referral should be recorded.

Confidentiality

Every effort should be made to ensure that confidentiality is maintained for all concerned. Information should be handled and disseminated on a need to know basis. This may include the following people:

- The designated Child Protection Officer
- The RCA's Chair and Vice Chair.
- The parents of the person who is alleged to have been abused
- The person making the allegation.
- Social services/police.

Always seek social services advice on who should approach the alleged abuser (or the alleged abuser's parents if the alleged abuser is a child).

Information should be stored in a secure place with limited access to designated people, in line with data protection laws (e.g. that information is accurate, regularly updated, relevant and secure).

Internal Enquiries and Suspension

The RCA designated child protection officer will make an immediate decision about whether any individual accused of abuse should be temporarily suspended pending further police and social services inquiries.

Irrespective of the findings of the social services or police inquiries the RCA Executive Committee will assess all individual cases to decide whether a member or volunteer can be reinstated and how this can be sensitively handled. This may be a difficult decision; particularly where there is insufficient evidence to uphold any action by the police. In such cases, the Executive Committee must reach a decision based upon the available information which could suggest that on a balance of probability, it is more likely than not that the allegation is true. The welfare of the child should remain of paramount importance throughout.

Support to deal with the aftermath of abuse:

Consideration should be given to the kind of support that children, parents and members of staff may need. Use of helplines, support groups and open meetings will maintain an open culture and help the healing process. The British Association for Counselling Directory is available from The British Association for Counselling, 1 Regent Place, Rugby CV21 2PJ, Tel: 01788 550899, Fax: 01788 562189,

E-mail: bac@bacp.co.uk,

Internet: <http://www.bacp.co.uk>.

Consideration should be given to what kind of support may be appropriate for the alleged perpetrator.

Allegations of previous abuse

Allegations of abuse may be made some time after the event (e.g. by an adult who was abused as a child or by a member of staff who is still currently working with children). Where such an allegation is made, the RCA should follow the procedures as detailed above and report the matter to the social services or the police. This is because other children, either within or outside Carnival, may be at risk from this person. Anyone who has a previous criminal conviction for offences related to abuse is automatically excluded from working with children. This is reinforced by the details of the Protection of Children Act 1999.

Action if bullying is suspected

If bullying is suspected, the same procedure should be followed as set out in 'Responding to suspicions or allegations' above.

1. Action to help the victim and prevent bullying:

- Take all signs of bullying very seriously.
- Encourage all children to speak and share their concerns. (It is believed that up to 12 children per year commit suicide as a result of bullying, so if anyone talks about or threatens suicide, seek professional help immediately). Help the victim to speak out and tell the person in charge or someone in authority. Create an open environment.
- Investigate all allegations and take action to ensure the victim is safe. Speak with the victim and the bully(ies) separately.
- Reassure the victim that you can be trusted and will help them, although you cannot promise to tell no one else.
- Keep records of what is said (what happened, by whom, when).
- Report any concerns to the Child Protection Officer. It may be necessary for him/her to share information with another organisation (e.g. school, if that is where the bullying is taking place).

2. Action towards the bully(ies):

- Talk with the bully(ies), explain the situation, and try to get the bully (ies) to understand the consequences of their behaviour. Seek an apology to the victim(s).
- Inform the bully's parents.
- Insist on the return of 'borrowed' items or that the bully(ies) compensate the victim.
- Impose sanctions as necessary.
- Encourage and support the bully(ies) to change behaviour.
- Hold meetings with the families to report on progress.
- Inform all organisation members of action taken.
- Keep a written record of action taken.

This policy will be reviewed annually (last review February 2017)